

Faith and Inspiration

Halite and Photons part 2

Previously in the first part of this series, we directed our attention to the practical relevance of the metaphorical reference to salt in the Sermon on the Mount.

There is one final note to consider regarding this particular representation of the quality of Christ's followers.

In traditional Jewish rabbinical contemplation, salt is often emblematic of covenantal intentions and actions, and is also indicative of wisdom. For instance, when the apostle Paul exhorts in Colossians 4:6 that our speech should be filled with grace "as though seasoned with salt," his statement may be derived from such a premise, whereby we should be emphasizing our covenant relationship with God and between ourselves as members of the same Body, sharing God's grace and wisdom.

Interestingly, the word in Matthew 5:13 that is often translated from the Greek as "become tasteless" or "lose its saltiness" literally means to "become foolish or less wise" and is based on the same Greek word from which we get the modern English word "moron." Thus, in being salt, Christians are meant to demonstrate Godly wisdom, not worldly foolishness.

Immediately following this assertion in the sermon that blessed believers are halite or salt of the earth, Jesus employs another vivid instance of symbolism that claims his followers are the light of the world. The Greek word translated "world" in this context refers to the world at large — that is, not merely the physical planet we live on, but the entire sphere of human affairs. Interestingly, we derive our English word "cosmos" from this Greek term, and its innate implication indicates an ordered system such as all of creation.

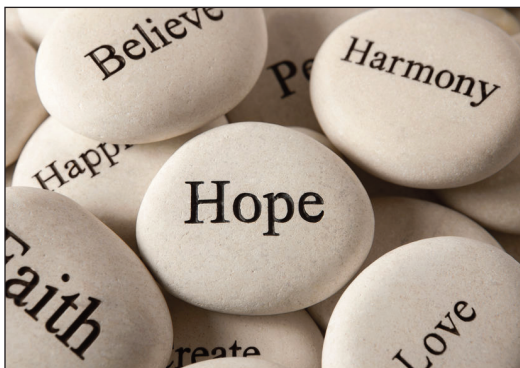
According to scientific analysis, the fundamental components of the cosmos — including photons of which all light is comprised — emerged from the initial expansion of the singularity representing the beginning of the universe. The primordial state of the universe was somewhat "chaotic"; in particular, the temperature would have been extremely high (1032 degrees Kelvin) and stable atoms did not exist. At this point, the universe was extremely dense and, in a sense, "dark" or opaque to photons of the wavelengths associated with visible light. Eventually, the universe cooled

sufficiently to permit stable matter to form and photons to roam freely. It is fascinating, and perhaps profound, to note that visible light came about as the result of the universe becoming more ordered. Thus, the outcome is what is alluded to in Genesis 1:3-4.

One of the distinctly paradoxical qualities of light is that it possesses no mass but does exhibit momentum (that is, energy and motion). Geniuses like Albert Einstein helped us question our ideas about the substance and form of light and its relationship with



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its environment.

In the television series "Star Trek: Voyager," the titular starship's primary physician is a highly advanced computer program that manifests visually as a sophisticated holographic projection in human form identified as the Emergency Medical Hologram or EMH. (In production terms, this is an extension of the rather charming "Star Trek" show concept of cutting-edge hologram technology that often serves as significant plot devices or catalysts.)

While initially activated as an emergency measure, the EMH actually goes on to function as a regular member of the crew, and part of the ongoing story in the show is his development into a "fully fleshed out" individual with concerns, desires, and emotions, ultimately to be treated as a real person and not merely as something insubstantial. The notion of "solid light" seems fanciful and fascinating, but light does in fact interact with solid matter in a manner unique to its idiosyncratic nature. In a particular episode, one of Voyager's crew members questions the ability of holograms to substitute for physical matter.

PARIS: But a hologram is just a projection of light held in a magnetic containment field. There's no real matter involved. (The EMH slaps Paris. Paris feels the impact.)

EMH: Now, you hit me.

(EMH adjusts settings on a console. Paris's hand passes through the EMH's head.) EMH: The magnetic containment field that creates the illusion of my body can be modulated to allow matter to pass through it or be stopped.

This leaves the crewman with little doubt that light can, in fact, physically affect its surroundings in a very concrete manner.

The significance of light in the Sermon on the Mount progresses in Matthew 5:14-16, where Jesus describes an intriguing portrayal of the effect of light by contrasting the impact of illumination at two different scales. A city on a hill is typically conspicuous, observable from a distance, and regarded by multitudes. During the night, even the limited external lighting of an ancient city might be freely visible to outsiders amidst the darkness of the encompassing landscape. As Jesus indicates, such a prominent manifestation of labor and resourcefulness cannot, by its very nature, be concealed or obscured from sight.

At the same time, a candle or lamp that is intended to light the interior of a room is primarily for the benefit of its occupants. In this more confined, possibly more intimate setting, it would not make sense to ensconce such a source of perception and vision.

Jesus concludes this theme of radiant believers by insisting that the entire purpose of luminescence witnessed in both broad and modest capacities is so that those who observe "may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." A city on a hill can evoke admiration for its builders from those who behold such a construct. Apparently, believers are likewise meant to draw positive attention from the culture at large that will provoke recognition and appreciation of the one who is building us into his divine edifice.

Furthermore, as active and fruitful followers, we also illuminate those in our immediate circle of influence, like a steady flame inside a windowless chamber, providing enlightenment and insight into the truth and reality of the Gospel message of redemption. In all that we do, whether extravagant or subtle, obtrusive or unpretentious, our goal is to attract those around us to God for his honor, to be a beacon of hope, compassion, acceptance, and restoration.

Like the EMH from Voyager, followers of Jesus are called to be "beings of light" who touch those around them in both literal, practical ways, as well as in profound and spiritual ways.

OBITUARY

Flora Jane Bryant Leitch

Flora Jane Bryant Leitch, 90, of Folkston, Georgia left this world peacefully, from her home, the morning of April 26, 2021 to be with The Lord; and reunite with her beloved husband Bobby and her family.



She was born November 14, 1930 in Naranja, FL to the late Robert Alonzo Bryant and Lula Muriel Johns. She was a member of the Traders Hill Chapel and attended the Homeland United Methodist Church.

When you think of Jane you think of Bobby and family. She and Bobby were married over 70 years, and they had an amazing special love that anyone could see. She loved her two boys and said she was at her happiest when she had them and a car full of nieces and nephews riding around in her Rambler. They called her "Rambling Jane." She carried this on having fun with her grandkids and great-grandkids. She visited her sisters everyday, loved visiting her old aunts, and liked to help elderly people. She loved South Florida, the groves, the fruits, plants, and gardening. She and Bobby moved back to Trader's Hill in 1993 and they took care of her dear mother until she passed.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband Bobby Leitch, her brothers Robin Bryant and Gordon Bryant, and her sisters Sally Cody and JoAnn Underwood.

She is survived by her two sons: Bobby (Fran) Leitch and Joe (Anita) Leitch; grandchildren: Pollie Leitch Wells (Trey Coggins), Billy Joe (Tera) Leitch and Andy (Amy) Dickerson; great-grandchildren: Emily (Bryan) Johnson, Sadie (Dalton) Grovenstein, Trent (Misty) Leitch, Darrell "Buddy" Wells (Cynthia Rogers), Austin (Shelby) Bennett and Trysta Bennett; great-great-grandchildren Emma Duncan, Miles Grovenstein and Beau Leitch; sister-in-law: Jackie Sweeney; Nieces and nephews: Betty Rennell, Steve Cody, Rick Underwood, Vickie Underwood Stone, Jeff Underwood, Gail Rhine, Bobbie Luton, Sara Burd, Brenda Schell and Morgan Luton. She is also survived by her loving and loyal companion Helen Ayers who became family.

The family had a visitation Friday, April 30 at the Shepard Funeral Home. Funeral services were held Saturday, May 1 at 10:00 AM at the Traders Hill Chapel with Rev. Eddie Rawl officiating. Burial was in Traders Hill Cemetery.

In honor of Jane, the family is asking that donations be made to Traders Hill Chapel c/o 346 R. A. Bryant Rd, Folkston, GA 31537.

Condolences may be expressed by signing the guest registry at www.shepardfh.com. Arrangements are under the direction of Shepard-Roberson Funeral Home, 526 Oakwood Street, Folkston, Georgia 31537.



New Study: Florida No. 1 Best State for Older Adults in 2021

There are many factors to consider when deciding where to spend your golden years. While it is different from everyone, most people share a desire for their money to go far, good weather, excellent healthcare, and a social life.

SeniorLiving.org analyzed 15 categories across taxes and finances, health and medicine, and lifestyle and culture using the most recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The five best states for older adults include: Florida, Oklahoma, Missis-

sippi, Delaware, and Massachusetts.

The five worst states for older adults include: Montana, Connecticut, Indiana, Washington, and West Virginia.

There are several reason Florida is the No. 1 best state for older adults:

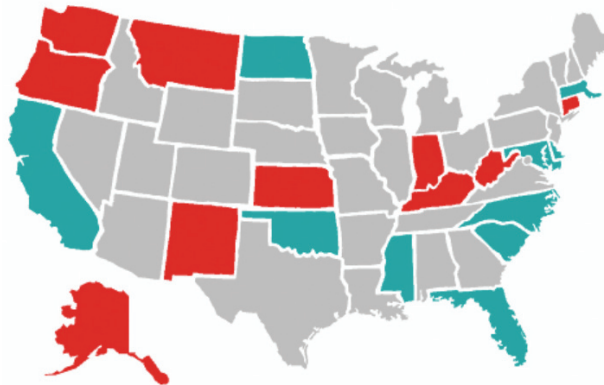
- No. 5 lowest relative tax burden among states at 6.8% and no SSI tax.

- No. 1 warmest temperature averaging 73 degrees.
- No. 5 highest population of people 50 and older.

Florida is the top overall state, ranking in

the top quarter in each of the three major statistical categories. Montana was the lowest-scoring.

Every major region of the country is represented in the top 10 overall states, but more Southern states made the top of the list than any other region.



Top 10 States

1. Florida
2. Oklahoma
3. Mississippi
4. Delaware
5. Massachusetts
6. Maryland
7. North Dakota
8. California
9. North Carolina
10. South Carolina

Bottom 10 States

41. Oregon
42. Kentucky
43. New Mexico
44. Kansas
45. Alaska
46. West Virginia
47. Washington
48. Indiana
49. Connecticut
50. Montana

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